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(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : C08G 63/00, 63/02	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 96/20970 (43) International Publication Date: 11 July 1996 (11.07.96)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US95/16015 (22) International Filing Date: 20 December 1995 (20.12.95) (30) Priority Data: 08/366,190 29 December 1994 (29.12.94) US (71) Applicant: HENKEL CORPORATION [US/US]; Suite 150, 140 Germantown Pike, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462 (US). (72) Inventors: ARORA, Kartar, S.; 106 Harrison Forge Court, Chalfont, PA 18914 (US). PAPALOS, John, G.; 230 Main Street, Ledgewood, NJ 07852 (US). JOHNSON, Grannis, S.; 286 Aquetong Road, New Hope, PA 18938 (US). (74) Agent: GRANDMAISON, Real, J.; Henkel Corporation, Suite 150, 140 Germantown Pike, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462 (US).		(81) Designated States: CA, JP, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE). Published <i>With international search report.</i>
(54) Title: AQUEOUS SELF-DISPERSIBLE EPOXY RESIN BASED ON EPOXY-AMINE ADDUCTS (57) Abstract There is disclosed a self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition comprising the addition product of reactants comprising (a) 1.0 reactive equivalents epoxy resin, (b) from about 0.01 to 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyhydric phenol, and (c) from 0.005 to 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct comprising the addition product of reactants comprising 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyepoxide and from about 0.3 to 0.9 reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkylenediamine having blocks of unsubstituted and monosubstituted ethoxy groups in random and/or block configuration.		

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AQUEOUS SELF-DISPERSIBLE EPOXY RESIN BASED ON EPOXY-AMINE ADDUCTS

Field Of The Invention

The present invention relates to aqueous epoxy resin dispersions based on epoxy-amine adducts. These dispersions are useful in preparing coating compositions comprising the same.

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Background of the Invention

Epoxy resins have come into widespread use as components in coating compositions. Coatings which comprise cured epoxy resins are valued for their durability, chemical resistance, and excellent adhesion to a broad range of substrates. Particularly desirable from an environmental point of view are epoxy resins which may be applied to a substrate with either minimal or no release of volatile organic components. Toward this end, there has been much research directed to the development of aqueous dispersions and

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emulsions of epoxy resins.

One class of aqueous epoxy dispersions employs one or more additives, also known as dispersants or emulsifiers or surfactants, which are necessary to stabilize the epoxy resin in the dispersion or emulsion form. Representative examples include an aqueous epoxy dispersion as described in U.S. Patent No. 3,301,804 (employing the reaction product of a boric acid ester derived from boric acid with both an alkylene glycol and a beta-dialkyl-substituted aminoalkanol as an emulsifier), U.S. Patent No. 3,634,348 (employing a phosphate ester as an emulsifying agent), U.S. Patent No. 3,249,412 (employing in combination a cationic emulsifying agent selected from the group consisting of imidazolines and amides and a non-ionic emulsifying agent), and Specialty Chemicals Bulletin SC-021 titled "Water-Reducible Coatings via Epoxy Resin Modification with Jeffamine (Reg. TM) ED-2001 and Jeffamine (Reg. TM) M-1000" available from Texaco Chemical Company, Bellaire, Texas. Another example comes from the technical literature of Synthron Inc., Morgantown, North Carolina, which discloses the use of PROX-E-141, a diglycidyl ether of Pluronic (Reg. TM) F88 diol (an ethylene oxide - propylene oxide - ethylene oxide block copolymer available from BASF Performance Chemicals, Parsippany, New Jersey) as a reactive dispersant for epoxy resins. PROX-E-141 can act as a dispersant for epoxy resin in water, but then will react along with the epoxy resin when exposed to an amine functional curing agent.

The use of an additive to provide stability to an aqueous epoxy dispersion is preferably avoided as such additives add additional cost, formulation complexity, and may potentially interfere with the performance of a coating derived from the aqueous epoxy dispersion.

It is known to prepare aqueous epoxy dispersions from self-emulsifying epoxy resins. For example, U.S. Patent No. 4,315,044 describes a stable epoxy dispersion composition comprising (1) an aqueous medium; and (2) between about 50-70 weight percent of self-emulsifying epoxy resin which is the addition product of reactants comprising (a) 40-90 parts by weight of diglycidyl ether of dihydric phenol, (b) 5-35 parts by weight of dihydric phenol, and (c) 2-15 parts by weight of diglycidyl ether of polyoxyalkylene glycol, wherein the molecular weight of the epoxy resin is in the range between about 500-20,000. The dispersion can also

contain 1-25 weight percent based on resin solids of a water-immiscible C₆-C₂₀ aliphatic monoepoxide reactive diluent.

U.S. Patent No. 4,608,406 describes stable aqueous epoxy resin dispersions comprised of (1) an aqueous medium; and (2) between about 50 to about 70 weight percent of self-emulsifying epoxy resin which is the addition reaction product of (a) 40-90 parts by weight
5 of a diglycidyl ether of a dihydric phenol; (b) 5-35 parts of a dihydric phenol; (c) 2-15 parts by weight of a diglycidyl ether of a polyoxyalkylene glycol; and (d) 2 to 15 parts by weight of an alkyl phenol-formaldehyde novolac resin wherein the molecular weight of the epoxy resin is in the range of about 1000 to about 20,000. The stable dispersions can be modified by the
10 addition of about 1 to about 25 weight percent of an aliphatic monoepoxide reactive diluent.

In an attempt to improve freeze-thaw stability, the stable aqueous epoxy resin dispersions can be modified by the addition of about 5-20 weight percent, based on resin solids weight, of a water-miscible solvent which, preferably, is a 2 to 8 carbon glycol or glycol ether.

15 There remains a need for further improvements in terms of the freeze-thaw resistance of aqueous epoxy resin dispersions, and in terms of the corrosion resistance and chemical resistance of coatings derived from aqueous epoxy resin dispersions which are adapted for application as industrial maintenance coating systems.

Accordingly, it is a primary object of this invention to provide a self-dispersing curable
20 epoxy resin which may be dispersed in water without the necessity for an additive to stabilize the epoxy dispersion.

Another object of this invention is to provide aqueous dispersions of self-dispersing curable epoxy resins which exhibit long term stability under ambient storage conditions.

Yet another object of this invention is to provide coating compositions incorporating a
25 self-dispersing curable epoxy resin, where the coating composition exhibits excellent properties when cured.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention shall become apparent from the accompanying description and examples.

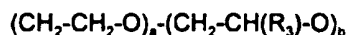
Summary of the Invention

According to the present invention, there is provided a self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition comprising the addition product of reactants comprising (a) 1.0 reactive equivalent of an epoxy resin, (b) from about 0.01 to 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyhydric phenol, and (c) from about 0.005 to 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct comprising the addition product of reactants comprising 1.0 reactive equivalent of a polyepoxide and from about 0.3 to 0.9 reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula



wherein:

R_1 represents a polyoxyalkylene chain having the structural formula:



wherein:

R_3 is a monovalent organic radical selected from the group consisting of C_1 to C_4 aliphatic hydrocarbons,

'a' designates a number of ethoxy groups $(\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{O})$,

'b' designates a number of monosubstituted ethoxy groups $(\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{R}_3)\text{O})$,

the sum of 'a' and 'b' is equal to or greater than 10 but less than or equal to 300, and where the ratio of a to b is between 1:0 and 1:1. For any values of a and b the sequence of ethoxy and monosubstituted ethoxy groups within a polyoxyalkylene chain may be completely random and/or there may be blocks of ethoxy and/or monosubstituted ethoxy groups.

R_2 designates H or a monovalent organic radical selected from the group consisting of C_1 to C_4 aliphatic hydrocarbons.

The self-dispersing curable epoxy resin of the invention is in the form of an aqueous dispersion. When cured, films of the self-dispersing curable epoxy resin dispersion are useful as a coating composition.

Detailed Description of the Invention

The self-dispersing curable epoxy resin used as a starting material herein can be any one of several self-dispersing curable epoxy resins that are based upon a

polyoxyalkyleneamine.

In certain embodiments, the self-dispersing curable epoxy resin based on a polyoxyalkyleneamine is prepared by reacting (a) 1.0 reactive equivalents of an epoxy resin, (b) from about 0.01 to 1.0 reactive equivalents (e.g. from about 0.4 to about 0.6 reactive equivalents or from about 0.65 to about 0.95 reactive equivalents) of a polyhydric phenol, and (c) from about 0.005 to 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct, wherein the amine-epoxy adduct is formed upon contacting 1.0 equivalents of a polyepoxide and from about 0.3 and 0.9 reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine. Such self-dispersing curable epoxy resins are described in detail in U.S. Serial No. 08/255,732, filed June 14, 1994 (which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Serial No. 08/086,288, filed June 30, 1993), U.S. Serial No. (Case M5463A), filed August 25, 1994, by J. Papalos et al., entitled "Self-Dispersing Curable Epoxy Resins, Dispersions Made Therewith, and Coating Compositions Made Therefrom (which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Serial No. 08/203,543, filed March 1, 1994), and U.S. Serial No. 08/366,343 (Case M5553), filed concurrently herewith, entitled "Self-Dispersing Curable Epoxy Resins, Dispersions Made Therewith, and Coating Compositions Made Therefrom", the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

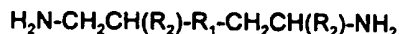
In other embodiments, the epoxy resin is prepared by reacting an epoxy resin with a polyoxyalkyleneamine having a molecular weight of from about 3,000 to about 15,000 in a ratio of about 0.001 to 0.060 reactive equivalents of polyoxyalkyleneamine to about 1.0 reactive equivalents of epoxy resin. Such self-dispersing curable epoxy resins are described in detail in U.S. Serial No. 08/296,283 (Case M5309A), filed August 25, 1994, by J. Papalos et al., entitled "Self-Dispersing Curable Epoxy Resins, Dispersions Made Therewith, and Coating Compositions Made Therefrom (which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Serial No. 08/173,455, filed December 27, 1993), the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

In yet other embodiments, the epoxy resin composition is prepared by reacting (a) 1.0 reactive equivalents of an epoxy resin, (b) from about 0.005 to 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct, and optionally (c) from about 0.01 to 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyhydric phenol, wherein the amine-epoxy adduct is formed upon contacting 1.0 equivalents of a polyepoxide with from greater than about 1.0 equivalents (preferably from about 1.01 to

about 2.5) reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine. Such self-dispersing curable epoxy resins are described in detail in U.S. Serial No. (Case M5362A), filed August 25, 1994, by J. Papalos et al., entitled "Self-Dispersing Curable Epoxy Resins, Dispersions Made Therewith, and Coating Compositions Made Therefrom (which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Serial No. 08/173,847, filed December 27, 1993), and U.S. Serial No. 08/366,343 (Case M5553), filed concurrently herewith, entitled "Self-Dispersing Curable Epoxy Resins, Dispersions Made Therewith, and Coating Compositions Made Therefrom", the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

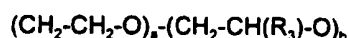
The Polyoxyalkyleneamine

The polyoxyalkyleneamine reactant comprises one or more amino-compounds where the amino-compound comprises both an amine group and a substantially water-soluble polyether chain. The polyoxyalkyleneamine reactant is soluble or at least partially soluble in water. Polyoxyalkyleneamines of this invention have the structural formula



wherein:

R_1 represents a polyoxyalkylene chain having the structural formula:



wherein:

R_3 is a monovalent organic radical selected from the group consisting of C_1 to C_4 aliphatic hydrocarbons,

'a' designates a number of ethoxy groups $(\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{O})$,

'b' designates a number of monosubstituted ethoxy groups $(\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{R}_4)\text{O})$,

the sum of 'a' and 'b' is equal to or greater than 10 but less than or equal to 300, and where the ratio of a to b is between 1:0 and 1:1. For any values of a and b the sequence of ethoxy and monosubstituted ethoxy groups within a polyoxyalkylene chain may be completely random and/or there may be blocks of ethoxy and/or monosubstituted ethoxy groups.

R_2 designates H or a monovalent organic radical selected from the group consisting of C_1 to C_4 aliphatic hydrocarbons.

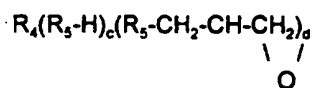
The techniques to prepare suitable polyoxyalkyleneamines are known in the art, and include reacting an initiator containing two hydroxyl groups with ethylene oxide and/or monosubstituted ethylene oxide followed by conversion of the resulting terminal hydroxyl groups to amines. Illustrative of the polyoxyalkyleneamine reactants employed in the invention are the Jeffamine™ brand of polyoxyalkyleneamines available from Huntsman Corporation, Bellaire, Texas. According to Huntsman Corporation, these polyoxyalkyleneamines are prepared from reactions of bifunctional initiators with ethylene oxide and propylene oxide followed by conversion of terminal hydroxyl groups to amines. The most preferred polyoxyalkyleneamines are the Jeffamine™ ED-series polyoxyalkyleneamines from Huntsman Chemical Company which have approximate molecular weight between 600 and 6,000, the value of 'a' for these polyoxyalkyleneamines is between about 9 to 132 and the value of 'b' is about 2.

The Polyepoxide

The polyepoxide reactant comprises one or more compounds each having a plurality of epoxide functional groups. The polyepoxide reactant has at least 2 epoxide groups present in the molecule, and may have as many as 6 epoxide groups present in the molecule. Techniques to prepare suitable polyepoxide compounds are known in the art, and include reacting compounds having a plurality of hydroxyl groups with epichlorohydrin in the presence of a suitable catalyst. Both aliphatic and aromatic polyepoxides can be used. Suitable aliphatic polyepoxide compounds are commercially available from Henkel Corporation, Ambler Pennsylvania under the trademarks "Capcures Reg. TM" or "Photomers Reg. TM". Suitable aromatic polyepoxides are glycidyl derivatives of polymeric aromatic alcohols or amines. Suitable aromatic alcohols and amines are those containing more than two hydrogen equivalents capable of reacting with epichlorohydrin. Examples of suitable aromatic alcohols are novolac phenolic resins and poly(vinyl phenol)s. Illustrative of suitable polyhydric phenols are 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)propane, 2,2-bis(3-bromo-4-hydroxyphenyl)propane, 2,2-bis(3,5-dichloro-4-hydroxyphenyl)propane, 2,2-bis(3-chloro-4-hydroxyphenyl)propane, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)methane, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfone, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfide, resorcinol, hydroquinone, phenol-formaldehyde novolac resins, and the like. Examples of suitable aromatic amines are 4,4-diaminodiphenylenemethane, 4,4-

diaminodiphenylenesulfone, 3-aminobenzylamine, 3-phenylenediamine, 4,4-diaminoazodiphenylene, and the like.

One representative class of polyepoxide reactant according to the invention has the structural formula:

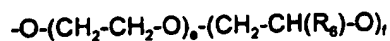


wherein

R_4 designates a linear, branched or cyclic aliphatic, alicyclic or aromatic organic radical having a valency equal to the sum of 'c' and 'd', where the sum of 'c' and 'd' is equal to or greater than 2 but no more than or equal to 6 and where 'd' is equal to or greater than 2 but less than or equal to 6. When the sum of 'c' and 'd' equals two (2), R_4 designates a linear, branched or cyclic aliphatic, alicyclic or aromatic divalent organic radical having from 2 to 14 carbon atoms, and specifically includes the hydrocarbon portions of the dihydric alcohols and phenols, ethylene glycol, butylene glycol, hexylene glycol, decanediol, dodecanediol and bis-phenol A which remain after the hydroxyl groups have been removed, and when the sum of 'c' and 'd' equals three (3), R_4 designates a linear, branched or cyclic aliphatic, alicyclic or aromatic trivalent organic radical having from 3 to 14 carbon atoms, and specifically includes the hydrocarbon portions of the trihydric alcohols and phenols, glycerol, 1,1,1-tris(hydroxymethyl)ethane, and 2-ethyl-2-(hydroxymethyl)-1,3-propanediol which remain after the hydroxyl groups have been removed, and when the sum of 'c' and 'd' equals four (4), R_4 designates a linear, branched or cyclic aliphatic, alicyclic or aromatic tetravalent organic radical having from 5 to 30 carbon atoms, and specifically includes the hydrocarbon portion of the tetrahydric alcohol pentaerythritol which remains after the hydroxyl groups have been removed, and when the sum of 'c' and 'd' equals five (5), R_4 designates a linear, branched or cyclic aliphatic, alicyclic or aromatic pentavalent organic radical having from 6 to 30 carbon atoms, and when the sum of 'c' and 'd' equals six (6), R_4 designates a linear, branched or cyclic aliphatic, alicyclic or aromatic hexavalent organic radical having from 8 to 30 carbon atoms, and specifically includes the hydrocarbon portion of the hexahydric alcohol dipentaerythritol which remains after the hydroxyl groups have been removed. The term

"aromatics" embraces groups such as phenyl, naphthyl, quinolyl, pyridyl, indoyl and the like in which the aromatic ring may be substituted by groups such as C1 to C6 alkyl, nitro, halo and the like.

R_5 represents a divalent polyoxyalkylene chain having the structural formula:



wherein

R_6 is a monovalent organic radical selected from the group consisting of C₁ to C₄ aliphatic hydrocarbons,

'e' designates a number of ethoxy groups (CH₂-CH₂-O),

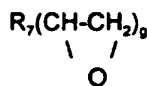
'f' designates a number of monosubstituted ethoxy groups (CH₂-CH(R₆)-O) where the substitution of one monosubstituted ethoxy group is independent from the substitution of any other monosubstituted ethoxy group in the polyoxyalkylene chain, the sum of 'e' and 'f' is equal to or greater than 0 but less than or equal to 10, and where the sequence of ethoxy and monosubstituted ethoxy groups within a polyoxyalkylene chain may be completely random and/or there may be blocks of ethoxy and/or monosubstituted ethoxy groups.

The most preferred aliphatic polyepoxide compound is the reaction product of pentaerythritol, propylene oxide and epichlorohydrin, having an epoxide equivalent weight (EEW) of about 230.

The most preferred aromatic polyepoxides are epoxy novolac resins such as Araldite™ EPN 1138 and 1139, epoxy cresol novolac resins such as Araldite™ ECN 1235, 1273, 1280 and 1299, epoxy phenol novolac resins such as Araldite™ PV 720, epoxy resin 0510, Araldite™ MY 720 and 721, and Araldite™ PT 810 all of which are available from Ciba-Geigy, Ardsley, NY. Tetrad C and Tetrad X resins available from Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Company are also suitable for use in this invention.

The Epoxy Resin

The epoxy resin used in the practice of this invention comprises one or more polyglycidyl ethers of polyhydric phenols having two (2) or more epoxide groups and one (1) or more six-carbon aromatized rings present in the molecule, as represented by the structural formula:



5 wherein

R_g represents a 'g' valent C₆-C₅₀ organic radical comprising at least one six-carbon aromatized ring (e.g. when g is 2, R_g can be -CH₂ - O - Ø - C(CH₃)₂ - Ø - O - CH₂ - or R_g can be -CH₂ - O - Ø - CH₂ - Ø - O - CH₂ - wherein Ø represents a phenyl group), and 'g' is equal to or greater than 2 but less than or equal to 6.

10 Techniques to prepare such epoxy resins are known in the art, and include reacting compounds having 2 or more hydroxyl groups with epichlorohydrin in the presence of a suitable catalyst. Suitable epoxy resins are commercially available from a variety of sources and include EPON (Reg. TM) epoxy resins from Shell Chemical Company, Houston, Texas, and DER (Reg. TM) or DEN (Reg. TM) epoxy resins from Dow Chemical Company, Midland, Michigan.

15 Examples of suitable epoxy resins are:

I) Polyglycidyl and poly(beta-methylglycidyl) esters obtainable by reacting a compound having at least two carboxy groups in the molecule with epichlorohydrin or beta-methyl-epichlorohydrin, respectively. The reaction is advantageously carried out in the presence of bases. Examples of aromatic polycarboxylic acids which may be used include, for example, 20 phthalic acid, isophthalic acid or terephthalic acid.

II) Polyglycidyl or poly(beta-methylglycidyl) ethers obtainable by reacting a compound having at least two free phenolic hydroxy groups with epichlorohydrin or beta-methyl-epichlorohydrin, respectively, under alkaline conditions, or in the presence of an acid catalyst and with subsequent alkali treatment.

25 The epoxy compounds of this type may be derived from mononuclear phenols, such as, for example, resorcinol or hydroquinone; or they are based on polynuclear phenols, such as, for example, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)methane, 4,4'-dihydroxybiphenyl, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfone, 1,1,2,2-tetrakis(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethane, 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)propane, 2,2-bis(3,5-dibromo-4-hydroxyphenyl) propane, and from novolacs obtainable by condensation of aldehydes, such as 30 formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, chloral or furfuraldehyde, with phenols, such as phenol, or with phenols that are substituted in the nucleus by halide atoms or C₁-C₁₈ (preferably C₁-C₉) alkyl

groups, such as, for example, 4-chlorophenol, 2-methylphenol or 4-tert-butylphenol, or by condensation with bisphenols, in the manner described above.

There are preferably used epoxy resins that have an epoxy content of from 2 to 10 equivalents/mole and that are glycidyl ethers or glycidyl esters of aromatic or alkylaromatic compounds. Especially preferred epoxy resins are polyglycidyl ethers of bisphenols, such as, for example, of 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)propane (bisphenol A) or bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)methane (bisphenol F), or novolacs formed by reacting formaldehyde with a phenol. For reasons of cost and availability, the most preferred epoxy resins are polyglycidyl ethers based on bisphenol A.

Preferred epoxy resins have an epoxide equivalent weight of less than about 400 grams/equivalent, e.g. from about 100 grams/equivalent to about 350 grams/equivalent, more preferably from about 150 grams/equivalent to about 225 grams/equivalent, e.g. DER 331 available from Dow Chemical at about 182 grams/equivalent.

The Polyhydric Phenol

The polyhydric phenol reactant comprises one or more compounds each having a plurality of hydroxyl groups covalently bonded to one or more six-carbon aromatized rings. The polyhydric phenol reactant may contain substituents such as alkyl, aryl, sulfido, sulfonyl, halo, and the like. The polyhydric phenol is represented by the structural formula:



wherein

R_h represents an 'h' valent C_6-C_{50} organic radical comprising at least one six-carbon aromatized ring, and 'h' represents a number of phenolic hydroxyl groups where 'h' is equal to or greater than 2 but less than or equal to 6.

Techniques to prepare suitable polyhydric phenol compounds are known in the art. Suitable polyhydric phenol compounds are commercially available from Dow Chemical Company, Midland Michigan, and Shell Chemical Company, Houston, Texas.

Illustrative of suitable polyhydric phenols are

2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)propane, 2,2-bis(3-bromo-4-hydroxyphenyl)-propane, 2,2-bis(3,5-dichloro-4-hydroxyphenyl)propane, 2,2-bis(3-chloro-4-hydroxyphenyl)propane, bis(4-

hydroxyphenyl)-methane, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfone, bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)sulfide, resorcinol, hydroquinone, phenol-formaldehyde novolac resins, and the like. The most preferred dihydric phenols are 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)propane (bisphenol A) and bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)methane (bisphenol F) for reasons of cost and availability.

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The Amine-Epoxy Adduct

The preparation of certain of the self-dispersing curable epoxy resins of the invention proceeds through an amine-epoxy adduct, where the amine-epoxy adduct is subsequently reacted with an epoxy resin and, optionally, a polyhydric phenol. The structure of the amine-epoxy adduct is dependent on the structures of the polyoxyalkyleneamine and the polyepoxide used in the preparation of the amine-epoxy adduct, as well as the relative ratio of the reactants. The amine-epoxy adducts are complex in nature due to the multifunctional nature of the polyoxyalkyleneamine and the polyepoxide.

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The Self-Dispersing Curable Epoxy Resin

Certain of the self-dispersing curable epoxy resins of the invention can be prepared by reacting an amine-epoxy adduct with a polyhydric phenol and an epoxy resin. The structure and composition of the self-dispersing curable epoxy resin will depend on the identity of the amine-epoxy adduct, the identity of the epoxy resin, the identity of the polyhydric phenol and the relative ratio of the reactants. The products of the above reaction are envisioned to be an extremely complex mixture of polymeric materials.

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Organic Cosolvents

The self-dispersing curable epoxy resin of the present invention may be combined with a non-reactive, organic cosolvent. The cosolvent serves to reduce the viscosity of the self-dispersible curable epoxy resin before its dispersion in water as well as that of the aqueous pre-emulsion of the epoxy resin and the aqueous emulsion that is formed by reduction of the particle size of the resin in the pre-emulsion. Another function that the organic cosolvent may perform is the prevention of agglomeration of dispersed resin particles which stabilizes the dispersion of the resin. A variety of organic cosolvents are considered suitable for use in this invention. Suitable

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cosolvents consist of non-solvents as well as solvents for the self-dispersible epoxy resins. The cosolvent may be miscible, partly miscible or immiscible with water. Mixtures of two or more organic cosolvents can also be employed in this invention. Examples of organic cosolvents include the lower fatty acid esters or alkyl ethers of monohydric and dihydric alcohols (or polyethers thereof), wherein the alkyl group comprises C₁-C₈ linear or branched aliphatic or alicyclic chains and lower alkyl ketones, e.g. ketones having a total of from 3 to 6 carbon atoms, preferably methyl lower-alkyl ketones, wherein said lower alkyl group has from 1 to 3 carbon atoms. The choice of cosolvent can affect the pot-life of the self-dispersing curable epoxy resin. For example, for a given resin it may be possible to increase the pot-life by substituting for a cosolvent such as Ektasolve EP (Eastman Chemicals) with one of the following cosolvents (the greater increase being obtained in order): 1-methoxy-2-propyl acetate, methyl n-amyl ketone, or dipropylene glycol n-butyl ether.

Reactive Diluents

The preferred stable aqueous epoxy resin dispersions of the present invention are those which contain a water-immiscible C₆-C₂₀ aliphatic monoepoxide reactive diluent. The said monoepoxide component can contain alicyclic and aromatic structures, as well as halogen, sulfur, phosphorus, and other such heteroatoms. Suitable reactive diluents are available from CVC Specialty Chemicals, Inc., Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

Illustrative of monoepoxide reactive diluents are epoxidized unsaturated hydrocarbons such as decene and cyclohexene; glycidyl ethers of monohydric alcohols such as 2-ethylhexanol, dodecanol and eicosanol; glycidyl esters of monocarboxylic acids such as hexanoic acid; acetals of glycidaldehyde; and the like. The preferred reactive diluent is glycidyl ether of monohydric C₆-C₁₀ aliphatic alcohols.

The presence of a water-immiscible C₆-C₂₀ aliphatic monoepoxide reactive diluent in an aqueous epoxy resin dispersion has significant beneficial effects in addition to modifying the viscosity of the dispersion. For example, the said water-immiscible reactive diluent appears to coat the particles of epoxy resin solids and thereby provide the aqueous dispersion with improved shear, freeze-thaw resistance, shelf viscosity stability, and paint gloss.

Also, since the reactive diluent is epoxy functional, it becomes chemically bonded into the film which is formed during the subsequent room temperature curing of the aqueous dispersion composition after it has been blended with a curing agent and coated on a surface. The total quantity of reactive diluent contributes to the calculated proportion of non-volatiles in the dispersion composition.

Preparation of the Self-Dispersing Curable Epoxy Resin

In preparing certain of the self-dispersing curable epoxy resins of this invention, an amine-epoxy adduct is first prepared by combining the polyoxyalkyleneamine reactant and the polyepoxide reactant, heating the mixture slowly to about 130°C, holding the mixture at temperature for about 2.5 hours, and then discharging the amine-epoxy adduct from the reactor. The respective self-dispersing epoxy resin is prepared by combining the amine-epoxy adduct, the polyhydric phenol and the epoxy resin, and heating the mixture in the presence of a catalyst, e.g., potassium hydroxide, triphenyl phosphine, benzyl dimethylamine and the like, to a temperature of about 150 °C with stirring. An exothermic reaction will then occur, and cooling is applied to maintain the reaction temperature at about 150-160°C. The mixture is maintained at about 160°C for about one hour subsequent to the conclusion of the exothermic reaction. If the reaction has not proceeded to the desired degree of completion (as determined by the epoxide equivalent weight of the resin), the mixture is then heated to 190°C. The mixture is then maintained at 190°C for about 15 minutes in order to drive the reaction to the desired degree of completion, then cooled to about 160°C whereupon a small amount of a water-soluble organic solvent is added prior to cooling and discharging the self-dispersing curable epoxy resin from the reactor.

In certain embodiments, the polyoxyalkyleneamine is reacted directly with the epoxy resin to prepare a self-dispersing curable epoxy resin. The conditions employed for such a reaction may be the similar to the conditions under which the amine-epoxy adduct is formed.

Preparation of an Aqueous Dispersion of the Self-Dispersing Curable Epoxy Resin

The aqueous epoxy dispersion of the invention can be prepared by charging the self-dispersing curable epoxy resin, as a mixture with an organic cosolvent, to a reaction vessel, then

heating the resin to about 50-100°C with stirring. Water is then mixed with the mixture of organic cosolvent and self-dispersing curable epoxy resin to form an aqueous pre-emulsion which will typically be a disperse oil phase having a larger particle size. The relative amounts of the resin, water and organic cosolvent can vary broadly, but will typically be roughly equal, e.g. the amounts of each of resin, water and organic cosolvent will range between about 20% to about 50% each, more typically from about 35% to about 45% resin, and about 25% to about 35% each of water and organic cosolvent. One or more reactive diluents can be mixed into the pre-emulsion prior to reduction of particle size or they can be added to the aqueous dispersion after the reduction of the particle size.

The particle size of the oil phase in the aqueous dispersion can be modified by physical techniques to reduce the particle size. The particle size reduction is preferably accomplished by subjecting the aqueous dispersion to high shear, e.g. in a homogenizer such as that disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,533,254 (Cook et al.), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference, and commercially available as MICROFLUIDIZER™ from Microfluidics Corporation, Newton, Massachusetts. Homogenizers as well as other equipment suitable for making aqueous dispersion of epoxy resins are discussed in W. C. Griffin, "Emulsions", Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology, Vol. 8, pp. 900-930 (Kirk-Othmer, eds., John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, New York, 3d ed., 1979), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. High shear mixers suitable for reducing particle size are further described in Wicks, Z.W., Jr., Jones, F.N., Pappas, S.P., Organic Coatings: Science and Technology, Volume II, Application, Properties and Performance, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1994, pp. 42-45, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

After reduction of the particle size, at least a portion of the organic cosolvent is removed. The organic cosolvent is removed by volatilizing the same from the mixture. This is an evaporative process that may be considered a distillation. Sufficient organic cosolvent should be removed so that the aqueous dispersion will be low in volatile organic compounds, and preferably essentially free of such compounds. Typically, less than 1%, more typically less than 0.1% by weight of organic cosolvent remains in the aqueous dispersion.

The removal of the organic cosolvent will be facilitated by subjecting an agitated

dispersion to elevated temperatures and/or reduced pressures, e.g. a vacuum distillation. The precise temperature and pressure employed to effect removal of the organic cosolvent will, of course, depend upon the volatility of the organic cosolvent chosen, but temperatures that will cause degradation or polymerization of the resin should be avoided. Distillation is discussed in E. Hafslund, "Distillation", Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology, vol. 7, pp. 849-891 (Kirk-Othmer, eds. John Wiley & Sons, N.Y., 3d ed. 1979) and evaporation is discussed in F. Standiford, "Evaporation", Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology, vol. 9, pp. 472-493 (Kirk-Othmer, eds. John Wiley & Sons, N.Y., 3d ed. 1980), the disclosures of which are incorporated by reference.

The aqueous dispersion of self-dispersing resin will typically exhibit excellent chemical and physical stability over an extended shelf-life, e.g. of from five to six months. As an example of the chemical stability, the epoxide equivalent weight (EEW) of the aqueous dispersion of self-dispersing resin should remain essentially constant, e.g. should show no trend of increasing molecular weight, over a period of at least one month from the preparation of the aqueous dispersion.

Epoxide equivalent weight can be determined by differential titration with perchloric acid using crystal violet as an indicator (e.g. a first sample is titrated with 0.1 N perchloric acid to an endpoint that shows the first sight of green color from the crystal violet indicator, the amine equivalent weight of the dispersion is calculated from this titration, a second sample is mixed with excess tetraethylammonium bromide and titrated with 0.1 N perchloric acid to a green endpoint that persists for at least 30 seconds, total epoxide and amine equivalents are calculated from this titration, and the epoxide equivalent weight is calculated as the difference).

As an example of physical stability, the resin should not display layer formation for a period of at least one month from the preparation of the aqueous dispersion, i.e. there should be no formation of a macro-observable water phase as a layer separate from the dispersed resin phase.

Coating Compositions Comprising an Aqueous Dispersion of the Self-Dispersing Curable Epoxy Resin

The coating composition of the invention is prepared by combining the aqueous epoxy dispersion with a suitable hardening agent. The coatings are tack free after 45 minutes and have excellent film properties. An aqueous epoxy resin paint composition of the present invention may further contain additives conventionally employed in coating technology, such as organic pigments, inorganic pigments, surfactants, thickeners, and the like.

A room temperature curable water-borne coating composition is prepared by admixing a stable epoxy dispersion composition as described above with an epoxy-interacting curing vehicle, such as a polyamine curing agent. The ratio of active amino hydrogens to epoxy groups in the admixture is in the range of from 0.5:1 to 2:1 and, preferably, is in the range between about 0.8:1 to 1.5:1. For purposes of industrial maintenance paint compositions, the amino hydrogens must be sufficiently reactive to effect crosslinking interaction with the epoxy groups at ambient temperatures.

Suitable polyamine curing agents are those which are soluble or dispersible in water and which contain more than 2 active hydrogen atoms per molecule. Examples of such curing agents are alkylene polyamines represented by the formula:



wherein 'T' is an alkylene radical containing 2 to 6 carbon atoms and 'u' is equal to or greater than zero (0) but less than or equal to five (5). Such alkylene polyamines include ethylene diamine, diethylene triamine, triethylene tetramine, tetraethylene pentamine, pentaethylene hexamine, propylene diamine, dibutylene triamine, hexamethylene diamine, and the like. Other polyamine curing agents that can be employed in the practice of this invention are the polyamidoamines, which are reaction products of alkylene polyamines and fatty acids. Such polyamidoamines are well known in the art and are described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 2,705,223, 2,811,495 and 2,899,397, which patents are hereby incorporated by reference. Other polyamine curing agents are the adducts of polyamines and epoxy compounds such as those described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 2,651,589, 2,864,775 and 4,116,900, which patents are hereby incorporated by reference.

Examples of useful curing agents also include those disclosed in U.S. patent application Serial No. 08/085,861, filed June 30, 1993, entitled "Curing Agents for Aqueous Epoxy Resins", by Jason Chou et al., the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. These epoxy curing agents comprise the reaction product of reactants consisting essentially of an alkylene polyamine having less than about 12 carbon atoms, an aromatic mono-glycidyl ether having less than about 18 carbon atoms, and a diglycidyl ether of an aromatic diol having an average degree of oligomerization of less than about 3.5, wherein the ratio of primary amine equivalents of said alkylene polyamine to the total epoxide equivalents of said aromatic glycidyl ether and said diglycidyl ether of an aromatic diol is not essentially less than one, and the ratio of epoxide equivalents of said aromatic mono-glycidyl ether to epoxide equivalents of said diglycidyl ether of an aromatic diol is greater than one. Another useful curing agent is described in U.S. Serial No. 08/279,587, filed July 25, 1994, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. These epoxy curing agents comprise the reaction product of reactants consisting essentially of:

(a) an amine component consisting essentially of a mono-alkylene polyamine having less than about 12 carbon atoms (preferably a member selected from the group consisting of lower alkylene diamines, said member having from 2 to 8 carbon atoms and, more preferably, only straight-chain alkylene groups) and an alicyclic polyamine, said alicyclic polyamine being present in an amount of greater than about 10% of the amine equivalents of said amine component; (b) an aromatic mono-glycidyl ether having less than about 18 carbon atoms (preferably selected from the group consisting of mono-alkylphenyl glycidyl ethers and di-alkyl phenyl glycidyl ethers having from 9 to 13 carbon atoms); and (c) a diglycidyl ether of an aromatic diol having an average degree of oligomerization of less than about 3.5 (preferably less than about 1.5, and preferably derived from an alkyl bis-phenol, e.g. bisphenol A), wherein (i) the ratio of primary amine equivalents of said alkylene polyamine to the total epoxide equivalents of said aromatic glycidyl ether and said diglycidyl ether of an aromatic diol are greater than essentially one (i.e. the molar equivalents of primary amine groups of said polyalkylene polyamine are in excess of the molar equivalents of glycidyl groups, e.g. a ratio of from about 1.5:1 to 2.5:1, preferably from about 1.75:1 to about 2.25:1), and (ii) the ratio of epoxide equivalents of said aromatic mono-glycidyl ether to epoxide equivalents of said diglycidyl ether of an aromatic diol is greater than one (preferably greater than

1.5, more preferably from about 2:1 to about 6:1, and most preferably from about 3:1 to 5:1).

In addition to the amine curing agent, a curing accelerator can be included in the coating composition. Such an accelerator will serve to reduce the time for the coating to become tack-free. Useful accelerators for amine curing agents include tertiary amines, e.g. N,N'-bis(dimethyl-amino-propyl) urea.

Other curing agents can be used in the composition of this invention, particularly when the coatings made from the compositions are heated to effect a cure. Examples of such additional curing agents are the aminoplast and phenoplast resins. Suitable aminoplast resins are the reaction products of ureas and melamines with aldehydes further etherified in some cases with an alcohol. Examples of aminoplast resin components are urea, ethylene urea, thiourea, melamine, benzoguanamine and acetoguanamine. Aldehydes include formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and propionaldehyde. The aminoplast resins can be used in the alkylol form but, preferably, are utilized in the ether form wherein the etherifying agent is a monohydric alcohol containing from 1 to 8 carbon atoms. Examples of suitable aminoplast resins are methylol urea, dimethoxymethylol urea, butylated polymeric urea-formaldehyde resins, hexamethoxymethyl melamine, methylated polymeric melamine-formaldehyde resins and butylated polymeric melamine-formaldehyde resins.

Phenoplast resins are the reaction products of phenols and aldehydes which contain reactive methylol groups. These compositions can be monomeric or polymeric in nature depending on the molar ratio of phenol to aldehyde used in the initial condensation reaction. Examples of suitable phenols are phenol, o, m or p-cresol, 2,4-xyleneol, 3,4-xyleneol, 2,5-xyleneol, cardanol, p-tert-butyl phenol, and the like. Useful aldehydes are formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and propionaldehyde. Particularly useful phenoplast resins are polymethylol phenols wherein the phenolic group is etherified with an alkyl, e.g., methyl or ethyl, group.

Other epoxy resin curing agents may also be useful, e.g. catalytic curing agents: Lewis bases (such as tertiary amines), Lewis acids (such as boron trifluoride), cationic curing agents (such as aryldiazonium salts, diaryliodonium salts, onium salts of Group VIa elements, especially sulfur) and reactive curing agents: mercaptans, isocyanates, carboxylic acids, and acid anhydrides. Curing agents for epoxy resins in general are discussed in the Encyclopedia of

Polymer Science and Engineering, vol. 6, pp. 340-361 (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., N.Y., N.Y., 1986), the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference.

The following examples are further illustrative of the present invention. The reactants and other specific ingredients are presented as being typical, and various modifications can be derived in view of the foregoing disclosure within the scope of the invention.

EXAMPLES

Example 1

Self-Dispersible Epoxy Resin with Jeffamine ED2001. A suitable apparatus for this reaction consists of a round-bottomed flask, condenser, means for heating and controlling temperature such as heating mantle, Jack-o-matic[®], thermocouple, stirrer and means for maintaining inert (nitrogen) atmosphere. The reaction flask was charged with 55.2 g (0.24 equiv.) of Capcure 711 (available from Henkel Corporation) and 44.8 g (0.09 hydrogen equiv.) Jeffamine ED2001 (available from Texaco Chemical Co.). Contents of the flask were heated with stirring to 95 C. After 1.5 h of reaction at this temperature epoxy equivalent weight (EEW) of the reaction mixture was found to be 487. In a separate reaction flask, 261.5 g (1.34 equiv.) of D.E.R. 331 (available from Dow Chemical Co.), 81.5 g (0.72 equiv.) of bis-phenol A (available from Shell Chemical Co.), 57.0 g of the amine-epoxy adduct prepared above and 0.7 g of triphenylphosphine catalyst were heated with stirring to 160 C. Care was exercised to control the exotherm by stopping heat and/or application of cooling as necessary. The reaction mixture was held at 160 C for 1.5 h and then heating was stopped. It was again heated to 160 C and held at that temperature for 35 min. At that time EEW of the product was determined to be 533 (after correction fro amine value) and addition of 54.5 g Ektasolve EP (available from Eastman Chemical Co.) was made with cooling. The reaction mixture was then allowed to cool to room temperature. The reaction mixture was again heated to 85 C and addition of 92 g de-ionized water was made with stirring in 1.5 h. It was then cooled to 44 C and addition of another 38 g de-ionized water was made. At that time a sample of the reaction mixture was found to be inverted from water-in-oil phase to oil-in-water phase as evident by its ready dispersion in water. After that 130 g of de-ionized water was added over 1 h. After complete addition of water the product was heated to 55 C and held at that

temperature for 1 h. This gave 678 g of an aqueous dispersion of self-dispersible epoxy resin of 2.7 micron average particle size and 56% solids.

Example 2

5 Self-Dispersible Epoxy Resin with Jeffamine ED2001. The amine-epoxy adduct for this example was prepared similar to that for Example 1 except 58.4 g (0.25 equiv.) of Capcure 711 was reacted with 41.6 g (0.08 hydrogen equiv.) of Jeffamine ED2001 at 95 C for 1.5 h. The uncorrected EEW of the product was 462. Self-dispersible epoxy resin for this example was prepared similar to Example 1 from 261.5 g (1.34 equiv.) D.E.R. 331, 81.5 g (0.72 equiv.) bis-phenol A, 61.0 g of the amine-epoxy adduct and 0.7 g ethyl triphenylphosphonium iodide. The
10 corrected EEW of product was 556 prior to the addition of 55 g Ektasolve EP. The reaction product obtained was heated to 65 C and addition of 82.5 g deionized water was made in one hour. The reaction mixture was then cooled to 50 C and addition of 192 g deionized water was made in one hour. After cooling to room temperature addition of 150 g deionized water was made
15 with stirring. Aqueous dispersion of the self-dispersible resin was obtained with 3.45 average particle size and 44.8% solids.

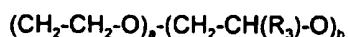
We claim:

1. A self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition comprising the addition product of reactants comprising (a) 1.0 reactive equivalent of an epoxy resin, (b) from about 0.01 to 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyhydric phenol, and (c) from about 0.005 to 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct comprising the addition product of reactants comprising 1.0 reactive equivalent of a polyepoxide and from about 0.3 to 0.9 reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula



wherein:

R_1 represents a polyoxyalkylene chain having the structural formula:



wherein:

R_3 is a monovalent organic radical selected from the group consisting of C_1 to C_4 aliphatic hydrocarbons,

'a' designates a number of ethoxy groups $(\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{O})$,

'b' designates a number of monosubstituted ethoxy groups $(\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{R}_3)\text{O})$,

the sum of 'a' and 'b' is equal to or greater than 10 but less than or equal to 300, and where the ratio of a to b is between 1:0 and 1:1. For any values of a and b the sequence of ethoxy and monosubstituted ethoxy groups within a polyoxyalkylene chain may be completely random and/or there may be blocks of ethoxy and/or monosubstituted ethoxy groups.

R_2 designates H or a monovalent organic radical selected from the group consisting of C_1 to C_4 aliphatic hydrocarbons.

2. A composition as claimed in claim 1 wherein said epoxy resin has an epoxide equivalent weight of less than about 400 grams/equivalent.

3. A composition as claimed in claim 1 wherein said epoxy resin has an epoxide equivalent weight of from about 100 grams/equivalent to about 350 grams/equivalent.

4. A composition as claimed in claim 1 wherein said epoxy resin has an epoxide equivalent weight of from about 150 grams/equivalent to about 225 grams/equivalent.

5. A composition as claimed in claim 1 wherein said polyhydric phenol is present in a ratio

of from about 0.45 to about 0.90 reactive equivalents to said 1.0 reactive equivalents of said epoxy resin.

6. A composition as claimed in claim 1 wherein said polyoxyalkyleneamine is comprised predominantly of ethyleneoxy groups.

5 7. A composition as claimed in claim 1 wherein from about 43% to about 95% by weight of the oxyalkylene groups of said polyoxy-alkyleneamine are ethyleneoxy groups.

8. A composition as claimed in claim 1 further comprising between about 20-80 weight percent of a solvent phase comprising between 50 and 100 weight percent water and between 0 and 50 weight percent of organic cosolvent, and about 20-80 weight percent of said self-dispersing curable epoxy dispersion composition.

10 9. A composition as claimed in claim 1 wherein 0.005 to 0.025 reactive equivalents of said amine-epoxy adduct are reacted per equivalent of said epoxy resin.

10. A composition as claimed in claim 1 wherein 0.005 to 0.015 reactive equivalents of said amine-epoxy adduct are reacted per equivalent of said epoxy resin.

15 11. A self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition prepared by the process of reacting (a) 1.0 reactive equivalents of an epoxy resin, (b) from about 0.01 to 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyhydric phenol, and (c) from about 0.005 to 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct comprising the addition product of reactants comprising 1.0 reactive equivalent of a polyepoxide and from about 0.3 to 0.9 reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine wherein the polyoxyalkyleneamine has the structural formula shown in claim 1.

20 12. An aqueous dispersion comprising a self-dispersing epoxy resin, wherein the self-dispersing epoxy resin is prepared by the steps comprising:

(a) preparing an amine-epoxy adduct by contacting a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula given in claim 1 and a polyepoxide, where the ratio of the reactive equivalents of the polyoxyalkyleneamine and the polyepoxide is in the range from about 0.3:1 to 0.9:1, and

25 (b) contacting the amine-epoxy adduct with a polyhydric phenol and an epoxy resin, where the ratio of the reactive equivalents of the polyhydric phenol and the epoxy resin is in the range from about 0.01 to about 1.0:1, and where the ratio of the reactive equivalents of the amine-epoxy adduct and the polyglycidyl ether of the polyhydric phenol is in the range from about

0.005:1 to about 0.5:1.

13. A composition as claimed in claim 11 further comprising (1) between about 20-80 weight percent of a solvent phase comprising between 50 and 100 weight percent water and between 0 and 50 weight percent of organic cosolvent, and about 20-80 weight percent of said self-dispersing curable epoxy dispersion composition.

14. A coating composition comprising a cured self-dispersing epoxy resin as defined in claim 1.

15. An amine-epoxy adduct useful in the preparation of a self-dispersing curable epoxy resin, the adduct comprising the addition product of reactants comprising 1.0 reactive equivalent of a polyepoxide and from about and greater than 1.0, but no more than about 2.5, reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula given in claim 1.

16. An amine-epoxy adduct according to claim 15 wherein said adduct is prepared by the process of reacting 1.0 equivalent of a polyepoxide and from about 1.1 to 1.5 reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula given in claim 1.

17. A self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition comprising the addition product of reactants comprising (a) 1.0 reactive equivalents of an epoxy resin and (b) from about 0.005 to 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct according to claim 15.

18. A self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition as claimed in claim 17 wherein said reactants further comprise from about 0.01 to 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyhydric phenol.

19. A self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition prepared by the process of reacting (a) 1.0 reactive equivalents of an epoxy resin and (b) from about 0.005 to 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct according to claim 15.

20. A self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition as claimed in claim 19 wherein said reactants further comprise from about 0.01 to 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyhydric phenol.

21. An aqueous dispersion comprising a self-dispersing epoxy resin as defined in claim 17, wherein the self-dispersing epoxy resin is prepared by the steps comprising:

(a) preparing an amine-epoxy adduct by contacting a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula given in claim 1 and a polyepoxide, where the ratio of the reactive equivalents of the polyoxyalkyleneamine and the polyepoxide is greater than 1.0:1, but no more

than about 2.5:1, and

(b) contacting the amine-epoxy adduct with an epoxy resin, where the ratio of the reactive equivalents of the amine-epoxy adduct and the epoxy resin is in the range from about 0.005:1 to about 0.5:1.

5 22. An aqueous dispersion as claimed in claim 21 wherein said contacting further comprises a polyhydric phenol, where the ratio of the reactive equivalents of the polyhydric phenol and the epoxy resin is in the range from about 0.01:1 to about 1.0:1.

23. A stable epoxy dispersion composition as defined in claim 21 comprising (1) between about 20-80 weight percent of a solvent phase comprising between 50 and 100 weight percent water and between 0 and 50 weight percent of organic cosolvent, and (2) between about 10 20-80 weight percent of a self-dispersing curable epoxy dispersion composition comprising the addition product of reactants comprising 1.0 reactive equivalents of an epoxy resin, between about 0.01 and 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyhydric phenol, and between about 0.005 and 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct, wherein the amine-epoxy adduct comprises the addition product of reactants comprising 1.0 equivalents of a polyepoxide and greater than 1.0 15 but no more than 2.5 reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula given in claim 1.

24. A process for preparing a self-dispersing curable epoxy resin dispersion, said process comprising:

20 reducing the particle size of a mixture comprised of a self-dispersing curable epoxy resin based on a polyoxyalkyleneamine, water and an organic cosolvent and

removing at least a major amount of said organic cosolvent from said mixture after said reducing.

25 25. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein the self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition is as claimed in claim 1.

26. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein the self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition is as claimed in claim 11.

27. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein said reactive equivalents of said polyhydric phenol are from about 0.4 to about 0.6 reactive equivalents.

28. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein said reactive equivalents of said polyhydric phenol are from about 0.65 to about 0.95 reactive equivalents.

29. A process as claimed in claim 24 further comprising preparing said self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition by reacting an epoxy resin with a polyoxyalkyleneamine with structural formula given in claim 1 having a molecular weight of from about 3,000 to about 15,000 in a ratio of about 0.001 to 0.060 reactive equivalents of polyoxyalkyleneamine to about 1.0 reactive equivalents of epoxy resin.

30. A process as claimed in claim 24 further comprising preparing said self-dispersing curable epoxy resin composition by reacting (a) 1.0 reactive equivalents of an epoxy resin, (b) from about 0.005 to 0.5 reactive equivalents of an amine-epoxy adduct, and optionally (c) from about 0.01 to 1.0 reactive equivalents of a polyhydric phenol, wherein the amine-epoxy adduct is formed upon contacting 1.0 equivalents of a polyepoxide with from greater than about 1.0 equivalents reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula given in claim 1.

31. A process as claimed in claim 30 wherein said reactive equivalents of a polyoxyalkyleneamine are from about 1.01 to about 2.5 reactive equivalents.

32. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein said organic cosolvent is selected from the group consisting of lower fatty acid esters or alkyl ethers of monohydric and dihydric alcohols, and polyethers thereof, wherein the alkyl group comprises C₁-C₆ linear or branched aliphatic or alicyclic chains and ketones having a total of from 3 to 6 carbon atoms.

33. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein said organic cosolvent is a methyl lower-alkyl ketones, wherein said lower alkyl group has from 1 to 3 carbon atoms.

34. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein the amounts of said resin, water and organic cosolvent will range between about 20% to about 50% each by weight of said mixture.

35. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein the amount of said resin in said mixture is from about 35% to about 45% by weight of said mixture and the amounts of water and organic cosolvent each range from about 25% to about 35% of said mixtures.

36. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein said removing is by vacuum distillation.

37. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein said removing is effective to reduce

the amount of organic cosolvent in said mixture to less than 1% by weight of said mixture.

38. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein said removing is effective to reduce the amount of organic cosolvent in said mixture to less than 0.1% by weight of said mixture.

39. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein said reducing is effective to reduce the mean particle size of the oil phase in said mixture to less than about 3 microns.

40. A process as claimed in claim 24 wherein said reducing is effective to reduce the mean particle size of the oil phase in said mixture to from about 0.1 microns to about 3 microns.

41. An aqueous dispersion comprising a self-dispersing epoxy resin prepared by the steps comprising:

(a) preparing a self-dispersing curable epoxy resin based on a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula given in claim 1,

(b) reducing the particle size of a mixture comprised of said self-dispersing curable epoxy resin, water and an organic cosolvent, and

(c) removing at least a major amount of said organic cosolvent from said mixture after said reducing.

42. An aqueous dispersion as claimed in claim 41 wherein said preparing comprises first preparing an amine-epoxy adduct by contacting a polyoxyalkyleneamine with the structural formula given in claim 1 and a polyepoxide, where the ratio of the reactive equivalents of the polyoxyalkyleneamine and the polyepoxide is in the range from about 0.3:1 to 0.9:1, and then contacting said amine-epoxy adduct with a polyhydric phenol and an epoxy resin, where the ratio of the reactive equivalents of the polyhydric phenol and the polyglycidyl ether of a polyhydric phenol is in the range from about 0.01:1 to about 1.0:1, and where the ratio of the reactive equivalents of the amine-epoxy adduct and the polyglycidyl ether of the polyhydric phenol is in the range from about 0.005:1 to about 0.5:1 to produce a self-dispersing curable epoxy resin

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US95/16015**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**

IPC(6) : C08G 63/00, 63/02

US CL : 523/404, 414

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 523/404, 414

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US, A, 5,221,700 (GILBERT ET AL) 22 June 1993, see the entire document.	1-42
Y	US, A, 4,423,170 (WADDILL) 27 December 1983, see the entire document.	1-42

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	*T	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
A document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	*X*	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
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L document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	*Z*	document member of the same patent family
O document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means		
P document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search

24 MARCH 1996

Date of mailing of the international search report

02 April 1996 (02.04.96)

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